THE ART OF TATTOOING.

A Few Years Ago It Was the Ruling Fad Everywhere.

Information Obtained from Sailors and Others Versed in Marking People for Life — The Picture Painted on a Chicago Tar's Back.

[Special Chicago Letter.]

Tattooing is an art practiced in many lands, but has nowhere reached such perfection as in some of the less progressive principalities of the east and in the South Sea islands. The word "tattooing" has been introduced into our language from the Pacific islanders. The custom, however, which consists of making punctures in the body and introducing a pigment which will leave an indelible mark, was known among the oriental nations, and was also very common among the barbarous races of

TATTOOER AT WORK.

antiquity. According to such a veracious historian as Herodotus, the Thracians considered a well-pictured body a sign of noble birth. The ancient Britons, also, practiced the art, as well as many of the aborigines of North America. Among the latter and the South Sea islanders the operation often was very painful, as it required months and sometimes years to complete it fully and was extended to almost all portions of the body above the knees.

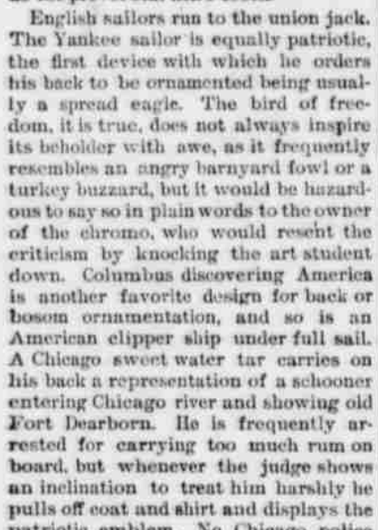
As civilization progressed tattooing became obsolete, and at the present time it is popular only among sailors and foolish young men and women.

In Chicago perhaps half a dozen seafaring men add to their income by practicing tattooing, the operation being performed in much the same way as that in vogue among the cannibals of Polynesia. A sailor whose skin is not ornamented by a number of impossible designs in various colors is considered *infra dig.* by his messmates, and that is probably the reason why he is as scarce as the proverbial hen's tooth.

English sailors run to the union jack. The Yankee sailor is equally patriotic, the first device with which he orders his back to be ornamented being usually a spread eagle. The bird of freedom, it is true, does not always inspire its beholder with awe, as it frequently resembles an angry barnyard fowl or a turkey buzzard, but it would be hazardous to say so in plain words to the owner of the chromo, who would resent the criticism by knocking the art student down. Columbus discovering America is another favorite design for back or bosom ornamentation, and so is an American clipper ship under full sail. A Chicago sweet water tar carries on his back a representation of a schooner entering Chicago river and showing old Fort Dearborn. He is frequently arrested for carrying too much rum on board, but whenever the judge shows an inclination to treat him harshly he pulls off coat and shirt and displays the patriotic emblem. No Chicago police magistrate can withstand so eloquent an appeal, and Jack is invariably discharged.

The stars and stripes float over many a noble chest, the red, white and blue lending the design uncommon attraction. The flag usually waves proudly and the man who would attempt to haul it down would literally have to walk over the body of its bearer. The proverbial anchor is to be found all over the bodies of seafaring men; in fact wheverthere is not room for a more elaborate design.

But it is not of sailors that I desire to write, but rather about the not insignificant number of young men and women who patronize the professors of the art



TATOOING A VENUS.

of tattooing. Several years ago every person of the irresponsible age considered it absolutely necessary to bear at least one indelible picture on his skin. The craze gradually died out, but if my informant tells the truth scores of lovesick boys and girls still contribute regularly to his income.

If John falls in love with Mary the first thing he will do is to hunt up some tattooer who will "decorate" his arm with a wreath and a heart surrounded by the words: "Darling Mary;" or, perchance, he will order an anchor resting on a rock labeled "Mary," or he will be satisfied with a fat heart bearing his sweetheart's name. Mary, too, will show her affection, provided she is innocent and sweet sixteen. She will duplicate her lover's heart and cause the tattooer to prick her tender skin so that she may carry John's name with her "until death shall them part." If John's Mary is a young woman, however, who knows something about the fickleness of mankind, she will be satisfied to treasure her lover's name in her own heart, and there only; for it would be decidedly unpleasant should Henry, or William, or George, or the various other successors of John ever see the euphonious name indelibly inscribed on an arm which they, poor, misguided fellows, supposed had never encircled any manly form save their own. John, too, usually regrets the haste with which he had himself marked for life, but in his case it does not make so much difference, for he can persuade his second love that once upon a time he had run away from home, and in the course of his ramblings, being reduced to abject poverty, had enlisted on board the good ship Flyaway. While taking a cruise around the globe another sailor, whose sweetheart's name was Mary, persuaded him to subject himself to a tattooing operation. Instead of inscribing the wound with John's own name, the crazy fellow, who was eternally thinking of his girl, made it Mary, and as the mistake was not discovered until late in the day, it could, of course, not be rectified. The explanation sounds plausible and usually is accepted in good faith.

Society buds, as everybody knows, are always doing things which have the appearance of being eccentric, and when a few years ago a leading Gotham belle had her shapely limbs ornamented with a tattooed garter in all the colors of the rainbow, hundreds of other foolish women followed her example. The fad at once became the rage. Garters were succeeded by elaborate designs covering the upper portion of the foot, the arms were decorated with allegorical designs, and not even the snowy white bosoms of the fair victims escaped the needles of the heartless wretches who were growing rich at the expense of their irresponsible patrons.

Fortunately fads never last long, and six months after the craze had first been introduced its followers began to move heaven and earth to rid themselves of the blemishes whose production had caused them so much pain. Tattooers who knew how to make pictures did not know how to remove them. The result was that many came out of the ordeal with ugly scars. To those who still carry their ornamentations, but wish to get rid of them, it will be of interest to know that according to Variot, a French authority, the proper way to remove tattoo marks is "to wash the part with a concentrated solution of tannic acid, then closely puncture it with a set of needles such as tattooers use. A crayon of nitrate of silver is next thoroughly rubbed over

A MASTERPIECE.

the area, and after a moment the skin is dried off, when it will be found that the punctures are deeply blackened by the formation of the tannate of silver in the superficial layers of the skin. The cauterization is said to result in an inflammatory reaction for a couple of days, and subsequently in the formation of a crust or thin eschar, which separates spontaneously in from fourteen to eighteen days, leaving beneath it a superficial red cicatrix which gradually loses its color and at the end of a few months is scarcely perceptible. Only a small area should be treated at one time, and a dressing of powdered tannin should simply be used."

At one time tattooed men and women were a great side-show and dime-museum attraction, but their number increased with such astonishing rapidity that the public soon lost confidence in the genuineness of their markings. The most notable tattooed man ever exhibited in the United States was a fellow named Capt. Constantimus, who traveled for many years with Barnum's show as a principal attraction. His body was covered from head to foot with oriental designs of birds, beasts and images. The claim made was that the captain, while on a voyage in the Pacific, was shipwrecked and rescued by a band of fierce Polynesians who, instead of eating the captive, made him an object of curiosity. Scientific men frequently examined the tattooing on the captain's body. Some pronounced it genuine, while others declared the makeup a "fake."

The fact is that while tattooed freaks were paying attractions Chicago turned out a large number of them at short notice. They were, of course, not the genuine article, and their coats of ink had to be renewed almost every day.

The only simon pure tattooed man of our day is, as has already been stated, the careless sailor who carries with him the emblems of his calling and his patriotism. Among seafaring men the craze for tattooing will live for many years to come, but as a fad it has had its day. That such is the case should be a subject for congratulation among sensible people who are satisfied to go through life without carrying ugly pictures on their skin.

G. W. WEIPPIERT.

It Was in This Case.

"Time is money," remarked Broke, with a sigh, as he gazed at his watch and steered for the pawnbroker's.—Life.

DIVERS AND DIVING.

Submarine Commerce and Its Interesting Features.

Interesting Chats with Plucky Men Who Have Braved the Dangers of the Deep—A Woman's Daring Feat—Pearl Divers.

[Special Detroit Letter.]

There is a certain fascinating interest about a man who has walked on the bed of the sea, alone and separate from his kind, with only the fishes and sea-monsters for companions. Such a one is Engineer C. P. Gilbert, who has recently renounced his dangerous calling to become manager of an electric light plant. It was amid the whirl of the electric machinery that I found him, and he very courteously responded to my request for an interview with the humorous remark:

"But I'm not in it now."

"Tell me some of your sensations when you were in it."

"Well, diving has left me with a slight deafness, caused by the pressure of the water on the tympanum. I ex-

C. P. GILBERT.

perienced a dizziness when I first went down."

"Where was your field of labor located?"

"I was employed in the government works in the harbor of Refuge at Port Huron. My greatest depth was only thirty-five feet. I was the first to use a telephone under water and get submarine connection with the world above me. I am a pupil of Capt Zuinn, who is a professional diver. I went down first as much from curiosity as anything else, and to inspect work being done."

"What did you find at the bottom of the water?"

"A great many fish. And they were as curious to see me as if they had expected me. The perch were there in great numbers, and so tame that they swam between the fingers of my extended hand. But if I moved, they darted away. They would swim round my head, and peer in at the glass windows of my helmet, and you have no idea how bright and curious their eyes were."

"What accidents are liable to happen to divers?"

"Collapse of the lungs from the escape of an air bubble after the high pressure. Divers have been known to die instantly after reaching the surface from this cause. Prostration after coming up, from change of medium on the spinal marrow, is said to be another fatal difficulty; but these are more liable to the deep-sea divers. Did you ever realize," continued Mr. Gilbert, "what a wonderful new world will open to the submarine navigator when the present experiments become a science? The water Columbus of the future may discover buried cities and riches we have never guessed at. I would like to see that time."

Mr. Gilbert resembles a clerical student rather than a man whose profession has been to battle with the waves, and his refined face bears no mark of his submarine hardships.

Capt. John S. Quinn occupies a very handsome suite of rooms in a marine building on the dock at the foot of Woodward avenue. He is a florid, fine-looking man, dressed in navy blue, and has a suit of blonde hair that would make a modern belle die of envy.

I told him that he had the reputation of being the best submarine diver in the country, but the captain modestly disclaimed all such notoriety, and it re-

DIVER AND HIS TENDER.

quired some strategy to get him to talk on the subject at all.

"How deep have you dived?" I inquired at last, in a matter-of-fact way.

"Only one hundred and fifty-four feet."

"How long have you been diving, Capt. Quinn?"

"About thirty-three years."

"Does it injure your health at all?"

"Well, now, do I look like an invalid?" asked the captain, turning as rosy red as a child.

"The deep-sea diving I have done," he continued, in answer to a question, "was at Norfolk, Va., where I raised the safe of the Cumberland, sunk by the Merrimac. That was in '62. No, I never had any adventures or met with a single accident. Raised dead folks? I should say so. I wouldn't touch a corpse with gloves above ground, but a hundred feet under water I don't mind them a bit. I have brought them up under my arm many a time. I have worked all day by a wreck with the drowned folks lying about watching me from the windows, or alongside, and didn't mind it down there. When the Mamie was sunk in the Detroit river with forty children and the engineer's wife on board, I went down and got them out. The woman was wedged in by timbers, and I could see her all the time I was getting the others out."

The diver said further that submarine carpenter work could be carried on easily when the diver was accustomed to the distance.

"We use a six-pound hammer under water to drive a nail with, on account of the resistance of the water. If the timber is soft, it is sometimes difficult to make an impression."

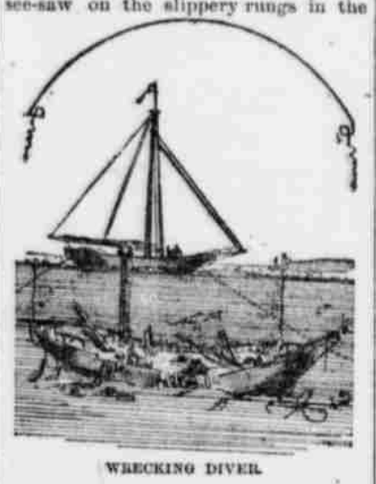
Asked about weights, he said he carried one hundred and thirty pounds beside the helmet. More weights are required in salt water than in fresh on account of its buoyancy.

Capt. Quinn said that divers lost their lives sometimes by becoming entangled and getting frightened, and cited the case of one man who went down from the Clayton Belle and gave no signal. The assistants signaled and received no answer. A brother of Capt. Quinn, also a diver, was in his diving-dress and went down at once and found the life line entangled with some part of the schooner. He brought the man up, but he was already dead from concussion of the brain caused by the fright.

One of the most daring and interesting feats of submarine diving was the search for the monitor Milwaukee, sunk during the war in Mobile harbor. This splendid man-of-war was a monster, double-turreted monitor with a death-dealing battery of four fifteen-inch guns. She rode the water, a grim turreted fortress, belching thunder and death one moment; the next she was shattered, disabled, sunk in the depth of the waters she had troubled.

Then came the arduous task of searching the submerged monster and saving to the government the loss of her valuable machinery and the guns, which cost thirty thousand dollars each. There was also much personal property, for the rescue of which stipulated sums were paid. And it was for these petty purposes that the brave professional diver nearly lost his life. To find a seaman's trunk in a secluded stateroom he was chambered with a horrible death, entangled in the life line and air-hose, groping vainly for an exit from the ship. The movements of the diver had set in motion boxes that were oozing with slime, and one of these slipped into the man hole of the ship, through which he had entered, and shut him off. His biographer says:

"It was deadly sport, that swing and see-saw on the slippery rungs in the



WRECKING DIVER.

miserable loneliness of the shrouded cabin. It was no rush of air sending life tingling in the blood made brilliant with the carmine of oxygen, but the dense mephitic sough of the thick wall of water. He descended again and sat on the floor to think."

That he wrought to good effect is evident from the fact that he saved his own life and also the ship's property.

The cabin of a sunken vessel, no matter how many windows are in it, is dark as midnight, and every shadow or ray of light that the diver admits with him is exaggerated and misleading.

This sense of abnormal conditions is heightened and intensified by the atmosphere. To drive a nail under water the driver must rely on his sense of touch. If guided by sight he would never hit the nail at all, although he might see it as plain as day. His aim would be as wide of the mark as that of the average woman when she hits her thumb.

It is the same with sound, which is not, however, intensified by the water, but so condensed and subdued that submarine depths are known as the "world of silence." There is said to be a sweet, murmurous atmosphere which is supposed to be produced by a species of mollusk. The same sounds are heard in the waters of the gulf of Mexico, where they are attributed to the singing sands. Working at a depth of seventy, eighty or one hundred feet, the diver hears no sound from the world above, and the fishes that come in shoals to watch him with their bright inquisitive eyes are as noiseless as the water they live in. Fellow-divers can only hear each other by the intervention of touch, which opens a channel for communication by sound in a world of silence.

The wife of a naval officer whose home is at Vineyard Haven put on a diver's suit and went down in eighteen feet of water in the sound of Gay Head where the steamer City of Columbus was wrecked some years ago. She walked about on the bed of the sound and picked up one of the dishes belonging to the wreck, but pulled on the life-line, instead of the air line, and was at once raised to the surface. As her face was much flushed, her friends would not permit her to go down again.

The pearl fishers of Ceylon do not wear a diver's dress, but simply weight themselves. They come of long generations of divers and are almost amphibious. Throw a ten-cent piece overboard and half a dozen of them will dive for it. MRS. M. L. RAYNE.